BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Infoline

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http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Population

- **British Columbia's population increased 0.3% to 3,916,000 during the three-month period ending April 1st.** The quarterly increase in BC's population was above the national average (0.2%), but lower than in the Northwest Territories (0.6%) and Alberta (0.5%). This was the first time since the beginning of the decade that BC has not had the strongest population growth of any province, although both Yukon and the Northwest Territories have sometimes outpaced the province.

  Ontario's population grew at the same rate (0.3%) as BC's, but there was little or no population growth in most other parts of the country. Quebec and Manitoba (both at 0.1%) were the only other regions where the population increased. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Consumer Prices

- **British Columbians continued to benefit from the country's lowest inflation rate in May, as the consumer price index (CPI) increased at an annual rate of 0.9%.** This marked the eleventh consecutive month in which the year-over-year increase in consumer prices has remained below one percent. BC has had the lowest inflation rate of any province since July 1996.

  BC's lower-than-average inflation rate was largely due to lower shelter and transportation costs. The cost of owned accommodation fell 3.9% from May 1996, pulling the shelter component of the CPI down 1.4%. Lower insurance premiums and gasoline costs contributed to a 0.6% decline in transportation prices. However, price increases for food (2.9%, compared to 1.6%) and clothing (6.0%, compared to 1.5%) were well above the national average. In other provinces, overall inflation rates ranged from a low of 1.0% in Quebec to 2.4% in Manitoba. Canada's inflation rate was 1.5% in May. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Vancouver's 0.5% inflation rate was the lowest in any major Canadian centre.** Consumer prices increased 1.0% in Quebec City and Regina, and were up 1.1% in Victoria and Montreal. Winnipeg and Whitehorse recorded the largest annual CPI increases (2.4%), while prices declined 0.3% in Yellowknife. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **Exports of goods produced in British Columbia were 10.9% higher in April than in the same month last year.** The increase was largely due to a recovery in forest product exports, which were up 19.0%—the largest percentage gain recorded since late 1995. Exports of agriculture and fish products (+15.3%), machinery and equipment (+24.6%) and consumer goods (+36.3%) were also well above April 1996 levels.

  Newfoundland (+11.4%) was the only province where export growth exceeded that in BC. Ontario (+10.3%), Quebec (+8.4%) and Alberta (+8.2%) also posted increases that were above the national average of 8.0%. Exports declined in the rest of Canada.

  Year-to-date, BC's exports have increased 13.6% over 1996. Nationally, exports were up 8.1%, and Alberta (+19.6%) had the strongest export growth. BC ranked second among the provinces. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Report **Smoking and Youth**

Did you know...?
BC is the only province that produces nuts. While the bulk of Canada's supply of nuts is imported, some filberts/hazelnuts are grown in British Columbia.

- **BC manufacturers shipments were up 2.2% (seasonally adjusted) in April, after increasing 1.3% in the previous month.** Wood shipments rose 1.5%, while shipments of paper and allied products were 1.6% higher than in the previous month. Food shipments increased 4.2% after declining in the two previous months, and machinery and equipment shipments were up sharply (+28.5%), increasing for the first time this year.

  Nationally, the value of shipments was 0.7% higher than in March, with the strongest increases occurring in Newfoundland (+6.4%) and New Brunswick (+4.1%). Shipments fell in Alberta (-1.2%), Saskatchewan (-0.6%) and Quebec (-0.4%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Retail sales in the province dipped slightly (-0.2%, seasonally adjusted) between March and April.** While this was the third consecutive monthly decrease, the rate of decline has been slowing. Sales were down 3.9% in February (after surging ahead 10.0% in January), and 0.5% in March.

  Nationally, retail sales recovered from 0.8% drop in March, rising 1.1% in April. Strong gains were recorded in New Brunswick (+9.3%), Saskatchewan (+6.5%) and Quebec (+4.1%). However, sales rose only marginally (+0.4%) in Alberta, and were flat or down in all other provinces. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in British Columbia resumed their upward climb in April, rising 5.8% (seasonally adjusted), after a 7.6% decline in the previous month.** Sales were volatile during 1996, but have made strong gains since January, increasing by a total of 11.2% during the first four months of the year.

  Nationally, wholesale sales have been trending up since the beginning of 1996, and sales in April were 3.0% higher than in the previous month. The gain was attributable mainly to higher sales of motor vehicles and parts and industrial machinery and equipment. Renewed consumer confidence, lower interest rates, and increased activity in the non-residential construction sector have boosted the demand for these products.

  Among provinces, sales increases ranged from a low of 1.0% in Nova Scotia to a high of 6.9% in Saskatchewan. BC's 5.8% growth rate was the second highest in the country. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **British Columbia's timber harvest declined 1.6% in 1996.** Last year, 75.2 million cubic metres of timber were billed in the province. This compares to 76.5 million in the previous year, and is considerably less than the 79.2 million cubic metres of timber billed in 1993. Figures for the first three months of this year show a continuation of the downward trend, with the total harvest down 11.3% from the January-to-March period of 1996. *Source: Ministry of Forests data*

Tourism

- **Americans made 182,000 same-day car trips to British Columbia in April.** This was 3.0% more than in the same month last year. Day trips to Canada were up 6.6% nationally, with the largest increase occurring in Ontario (8.5%). Same-day trips to Niagara Falls increased 65% over April 1996, possibly as a result of a casino opening in the city in December of last year.

  While more Americans made day trips to BC in April, fewer British Columbians travelled across the line. Same-day trips to the US dropped 8.9% in April, and were down 6.6% nationally. Same-day travel to the States has been declining steadily since 1992, as a weaker dollar has made cross-border shopping less attractive to Canadians. Last year's decline (-0.4% in BC and -0.8% for Canada) was the smallest since the downturn began. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Volunteers

- **In 1994/95, about 37% of British Columbians said they were members of a voluntary association such as a school group, church social group, community centre, civic group, or fraternal club**. The Canadian average was 34%, with the highest incidence of volunteer activity reported in Saskatchewan and Alberta (both in excess of 40%). *Source: National Population Health Survey, Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report 1996*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Infoline Report:

June 20, 1997

Highlights from the Youth Smoking Survey

Originally published in *Infoline, July 19, 1996*. Reprinted here in light of recent news on the tobacco industry.

British Columbia Highlights from the Youth Smoking Survey

A full report on British Columbia highlights from the Youth Smoking Survey will be available next week from the BC STATS web site

http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

on the home page choose

Labour/Social

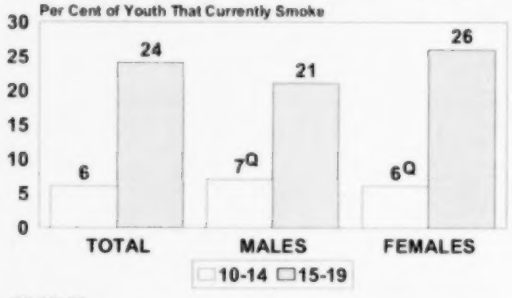
Then pick the article from the list.

Description of the Survey

Health Canada, in conjunction with Statistics Canada, conducted a survey in 1994 to collect information on the smoking behaviour of Canadian youth. Previous surveys have typically collected information on the smoking behavior of adults 15 years of age and older. The information gained from this survey will help fill a data gap with respect to smoking behaviors and the knowledge and attitudes toward smoking among the youth of British Columbia and Canada.

The survey covered two age groups, 10–14 year olds and 15–19 year olds. Data for youth 10–14 years of age were collected from a sample of students in randomly selected schools across Canada. Data for youth 15–19 years of age were collected as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey. The data collection period was from September to December 1994.

Female Youth In B.C. Are More Likely To Smoke Than Males - 1994

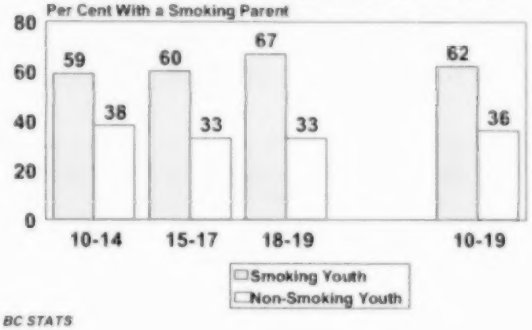


BC STATS

Highlights

- **15 per cent of youth (10–19 year olds) smoke**
- **26 per cent of young adult (15–19 year olds) females smoke compared to 21 per cent of males**
- **69 per cent of children (10–14 year olds) believe that children their age begin to smoke because their friends smoke/peer pressure**
- **62 per cent of smoking youth have at least one parent that smokes, compared to 36 per cent of non-smoking youth**
- **80 per cent of youth are aware of the legal age required for purchasing cigarettes**
- **Almost half of children smokers (age 10–14) get their cigarettes free or buy them from friends or family members**

Parent Smoking Habits Have a Strong Influence on Their Children - 1994



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Where Do Children Get Their Cigarettes?

BC STATS

- **17 per cent of smoking student youth say that they have either cut down or don't smoke at school due to school bans or partial bans**

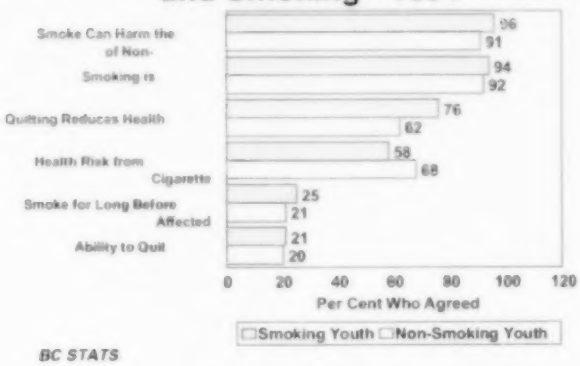
- **Over 80 per cent of smoking youth say that they have thought about quitting and about two thirds say they have tried to quit**

- **96 per cent of smoking youth believe that tobacco smoke can be harmful to the health of non-smokers, but only 58 per cent believe that there is danger to their own health from smoking an occasional cigarette**

- **More than three quarters of smoking youth believe that smoking helps people relax**

NOTE: Sampling Variability - Any data superscripted with a 'Q' carry a warning of a high sampling variability associated with the estimate. These data should be accompanied by a warning if used in any other report.

Youth Beliefs About Health Effects and Smoking - 1994



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also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/97	% change on year ago
BC	3,915.9	2.2
Canada	30,202.9	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	on year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Apr	2,950	12.9
Merchandise Exports (raw) Apr	2,247	10.9
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Apr	2,685	3.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change
(all items - 1986=100)	May '97	on year ago
BC	139.9	0.9
Canada	137.7	1.5
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change
(seasonally adjusted)	May '97	on year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,002	1.6
Employed - BC	1,825	1.5
Unemployed - BC	176	3.0
		May '96
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.8	8.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	9.5	9.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jun 18/97	Jun 19/96
Prime Business Rate	4.75	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.20	6.50
- 5 year	7.15	8.50
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jun 18/97	Jun 19/96
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.3869	1.3680
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7210	0.7310
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Mar '97	on year ago
BC	604.23	1.1
Canada	593.82	2.5

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Review

Released this week by BC STATS

- Consumer Price Index, May 1997

Next week

- Migration Highlights, First Quarter 1997
- Small Business Quarterly, First Quarter 1997
- Toursim Room Revenue, Annual 1996
- Earnings and Employment Trends, March 1997

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